

Artifact Analyses

Introduction

A total of 10,366 artifacts was recovered from the excavations at Clear Run (Table 3). Of these artifacts, nails comprised nearly half. Other types of artifacts included miscellaneous metal, Native American pottery sherds, historic ceramics and glass, and a small amount of faunal material. A full inventory of the artifacts recovered from the excavations is located in Appendix A.

Table 3: Artifact Material Totals

MATERIAL	WEIGHT	QUANTITY
ALUMINUM		6
COAL		4
COPPER ALLOY	173.70g	89
GEOLOGICAL		5
IRON	52,533.34g	2,240
LEAD	29.35g	15
NICKEL		3
SLAG/CLINKER	12,136.33g	
WOOD SAMPLE	1,569.71g	
ZINC		1
BRICK	2,770.70g	166
HISTORIC CERAMICS		56
COLORLESS GLASS		1,599
COLORLESS LEADED GLASS		6
COLORLESS NONLEADED GLASS		1,700
LEATHER		4
MISCELLANEOUS	230.00g	2
MORTAR		26
PLASTIC		42
RUBBER		2
NATIVE AMERICAN CERAMICS		67
FAUNAL REMAINS		99
NAILS		4,234
ARTIFACT TOTAL		10,366

Historic Artifacts

Generally, historic artifacts recovered from 31SP300*1* included glass, ceramics, brick fragments, mortar fragments, plastic, and bits of leather. Several bullet shell fragments were also recovered. A large amount of modern trash was found in Zone 1 of the test units. These artifacts were recorded and discarded, and included aluminum pull tabs, soda bottle glass, light bulb glass, TV screen glass, beer bottle glass, a sardine can key, and bits of plastic. The artifact analysis concentrated mostly on the ceramic sherds recovered during the excavations. The analysis revealed that the minimum number of vessels represented in the collections was 12 (Table 4). Ceramic types included whiteware, white graniteware, yellowware, hotel china, and porcellaneous wares. The vessels represented date to the middle to late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, which indicates that the blacksmith-cooper shop was in operation during these time periods. However, none of the diagnostic ceramic artifacts were recovered from features or from intact deposits.

Table 4: Minimum Vessel Count, 31SP300*1*

1	whiteware, flow blue, rim, table (97078-38)
1	whiteware, painted blue, underglaze, rim, table (97078-40)
1	yellowware, undecorated, body sherd (97078-8)
1	white graniteware, blue tint, molded floral relief, rim (97078-38)
1	white graniteware, undecorated, rim, molded, scalloped edge, plate, marked "Homer Laughlan Made in U.S.A., C6L", ca. 1926 (97078-08)
1	white graniteware, undecorated, rim, table (97078-10)
1	white graniteware, undecorated, rim, platter (97078-25)
1	white graniteware, undecorated, rim, 3" diameter cup/mug (97078-25)
1	white graniteware, undecorated, rim, 6" diameter bowl (97078-25)
1	hotel china, undecorated, rim, 8.5" diameter plate (97078-25)
1	hotel china, undecorated, body, table (97078-10)
1	porcellaneous ware, undecorated, body sherd (97078-07)

Metal Artifacts

Metal artifacts recovered from the excavation of the blacksmith-cooper shop at Clear Run included various types of nails, wagon/vehicle parts, gun parts, horse and mule shoes, and tools that would have been necessary to the operation of a blacksmith shop. The metal artifacts comprised nearly half of the Clear Run artifact assemblage (see Table 3). The artifacts were made of metals such as aluminum, copper alloy, iron, lead, nickel, and zinc. Of these types of materials iron was the most abundant.

Most of the metal artifacts recovered were nails. A total of 4,234 nails was recovered during the excavations. This number includes only complete nails and nail fragments that had heads. Nail fragments without heads were sorted by type and examined separately. The nails were sorted by type then by size. The types of nails found

at Clear Run included cut, wire, and an occasional wrought nail. Cut nails were by far the most abundant.

Types of cut nails ranged from small shoe nails to large spikes (Figure 38). According to studies of nail chronologies, the type of cut nail found at Clear Run is consistent with that of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Its head shape, flat ovoid, best characterizes this type of cut nail. The fact that cut nails were the greatest in number indicates that the blacksmith-shop was at its height during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

An abundance of wire nails was also recovered during the excavations at 31SP300*1* (Figure 39). The wire nail originated in Europe around the 1860s but was not popular until the latter part of that century. Because North Carolina was such a rural area at this time, this technology may not have caught on in the smaller communities like Clear Run until much later. However, Clear Run's access to many trade items through its steamship the *A. J. Johnson* may have helped popularize the wire nail earlier in the region.

Wrought nail production was time consuming, and as a result it became difficult for wrought nails to compete in the expanding market. The cut nail, then the wire nail that succeeded it, eventually rendered the wrought nail virtually obsolete. Very few wrought nails were found at Clear Run (Figure 40). Yet the lack of wrought nails recovered from the site does not really have much significance. The production of wrought nails is ongoing, as the wrought nail often functions as a specialty nail.

In addition to nails, nuts and bolts were found in large quantities at 31SP300*1*. The types of bolts ranged from those with round beveled heads to those with square heads (Figure 41). These types of bolts are commonly seen in such items as farm equipment and carriages. Bolts are a vital commodity for the maintenance of a farmstead.

The Blacksmith at Clear Run used bolts along with other items such as axle clips, thimble skins, and felloe plates to build and repair wagons used at the farmstead (Figures 42, 43, and 44). It is clear from artifacts such as these that the main job of the blacksmith at Clear Run was the upkeep of farm machinery. Along with the vehicle parts, tack items such as mule shoes and portions of bridles were also recovered during the excavations (Figures 45 and 46).

All blacksmiths rely heavily upon their tools. However, the excavations at the shop yielded few tools. The types of tools found included a swage fragment, punches, drill bits, saw blades, and tongs (Figures 47 and 48). The lack of tools is not surprising due to their importance to the smithy. It is likely that the blacksmith would have removed or salvaged his tools as the shop closed up or went out of business.

There were many types of miscellaneous metal artifacts recovered from the excavations. These include items such as a lock plate from a gun, two gun hammers, and a few shell casings and projectiles from the early twentieth century (Figure 49). Metal

strapping was also recovered from the shop. It has been speculated that the blacksmith at Clear Run also served as a cooper. The abundance of strapping may reinforce this idea, but the lack of iron rivets may suggest otherwise. Of the rivets and burs recovered, most tended to be made of copper.

Native American Artifacts

Very few Native American artifacts were recovered during the excavations; all were ceramic. During the excavation, 67 sherds were recovered. Of these, four types were identified. These included Oak Island, Cape Fear, Cashie, and Hanover. None of the sherds was recovered from a prehistoric context and this component of the site was not excavated.

Faunal Remains

The faunal remains recovered from the excavations at Clear Run were generally unremarkable. The fragments were small and few were identifiable. Most of the fragments were mammalian and were probably from large animals such as cow or horse. One species of fish, *Lepisosteus* sp. (gar), was identified.